

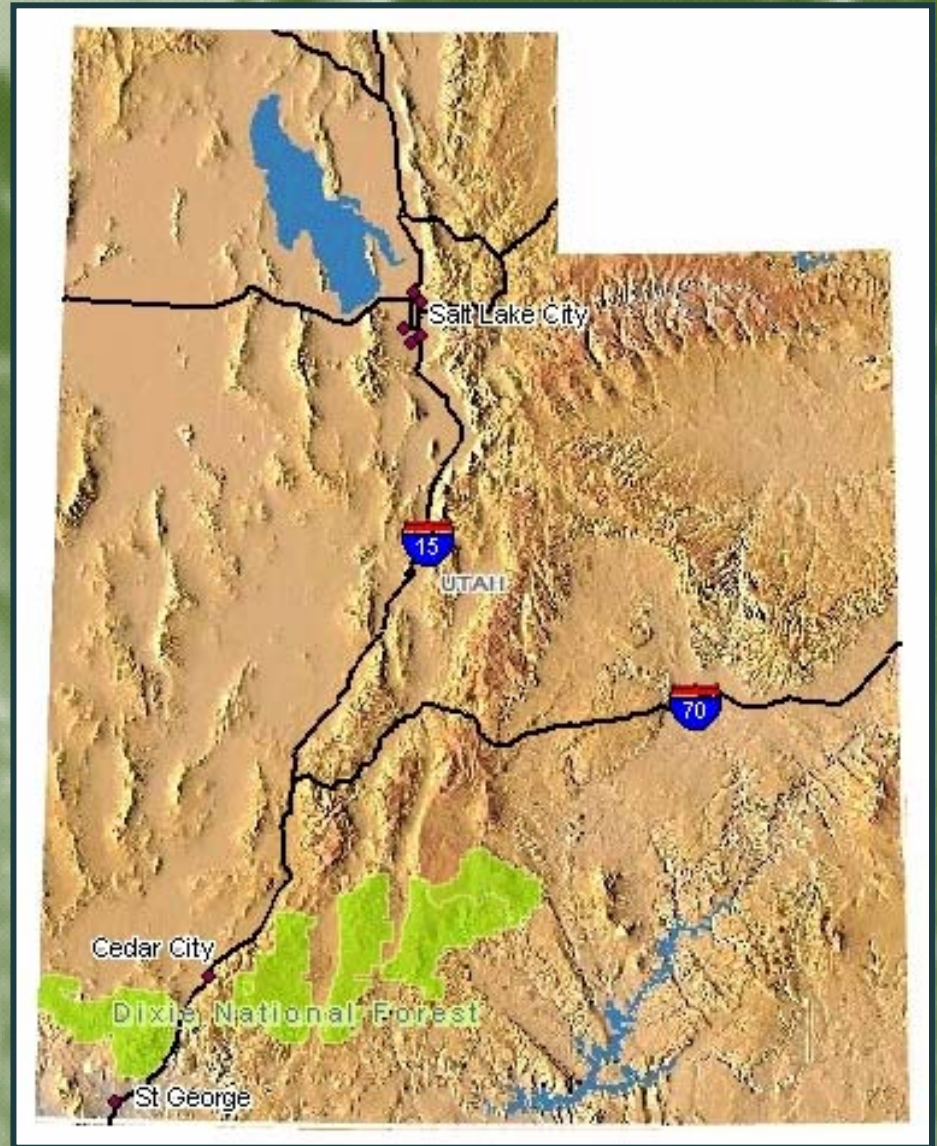
Ecological Appreciation and Stewardship: Concepts for Motorized Travel Planning

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Presentation Overview

- **Introduction:**
**Aesthetic
philosophy and
travel planning**
- **Project Drivers:**
**Ecology and
Humans**
- **Exercises in
Collaboration: Scale
and Formality**
- **Forest-Wide
Motorized Travel
Planning (MTP)**



Landscape Aesthetics

International Union of Forestry Research Organizations (IUFRO)

Forests and Landscapes: Linking Ecology, Sustainability and Aesthetics (Sheppard and Harshaw, 2001)

- **Scenic model** of landscape management. Nature-as-scenery, dramatic, romantic, visual, protection from management activities). Scenic management based on emotion.
- **Ecological aesthetic** (beauty lies in each landscape, ecological integrity guides interpretation of beauty). Scenic management based on ecologic science.
- **Ecologic appreciation** (knowledge, experience and learning about sustainable ecosystems). Integrates science and values.

The Concept of Visible Stewardship

We find aesthetic [appreciate] those things that clearly show people's care for and attachment to a particular landscape; in otherwords, that we like man-modified landscapes that clearly demonstrate respect for nature in a certain place and context.
(Sheppard)

Emphasizes not whether the landscape looks natural, orderly or culturally appropriate but looks as though real individuals care for the land and place; people who are linked to it, rooted in it, invested in it, working in it in a symbiotic and contiuously vigilant manner, perhaps from generation to generation.
(Sheppard)

Forest management activities will not be perceived as good if they fail to demonstrate an obvious and sustained commitment of people to the places under their control.

Appreciation Development as a Multi-Value Framework for Sustainability

People's views on forest management are diverse and not always compatible.

Instead of arguing whose ideas are better, perhaps a more constructive way to proceed is to respect the legitimacy of these multiple values and work together to integrate them to achieve the shared goal of a sustainable future for nature and people. (Gobster)

Sustainable forest management as a social and political concept requires public dialogue to define what should be sustained and what tradeoffs will be made to achieve sustainability. Sustainability itself cannot be easily measured but improvements, but progress toward it can be seen. (Kruger)

For appreciation to occur, we need a deliberative process for management at the local level.

OHV Management on the Dixie NF

Project Drivers

Ecologic issues

**(resource goals and
problems)**

+

Human activities

**(values, politics and
conflict)**

=

Need for change

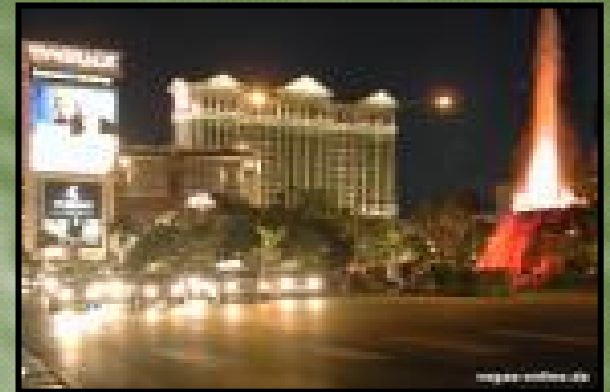


Demographics

Acknowledging Permanent Change

The Dixie NF is a destination area for recreation use:

- **Multiple subdivisions, esp. Duck Creek Village**
- **Adjacent to high-growth urban areas**
- **3 hours from Las Vegas, 4 hours from Salt Lake City**



Travel Management on the Dixie NF

Multiple attempts to improve travel management through smaller projects:

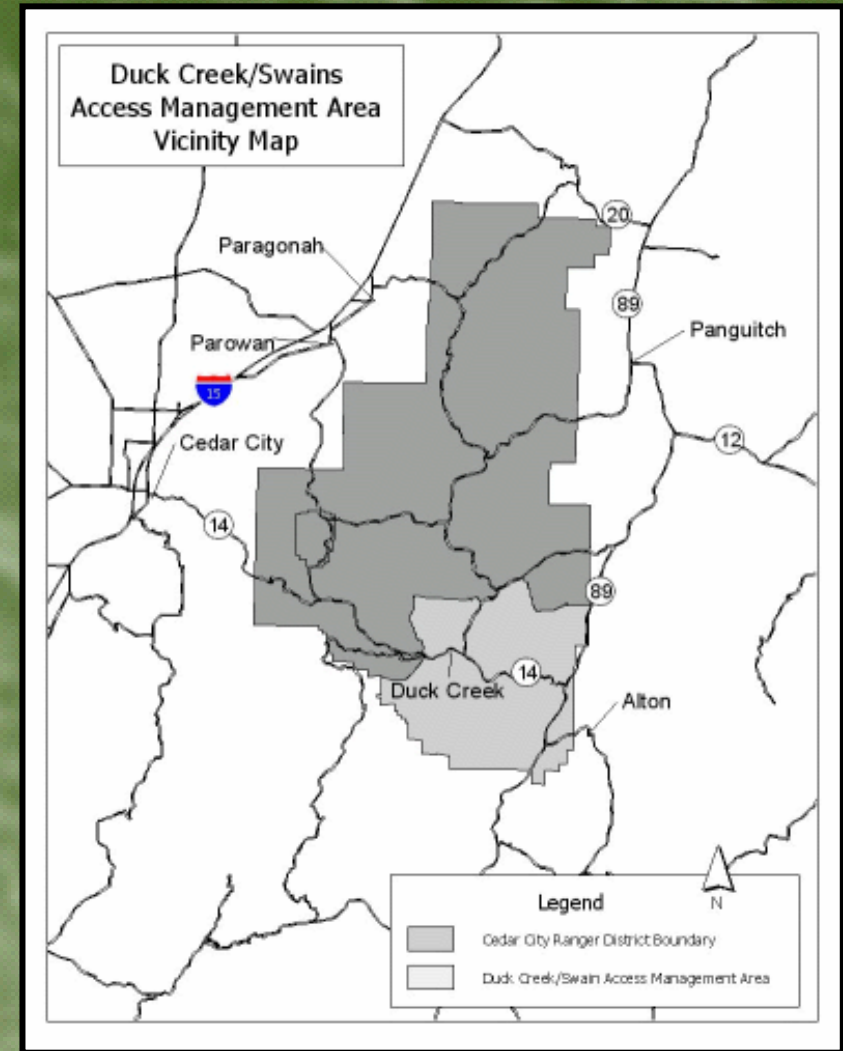
- **Timber harvesting/ vegetation management projects**
- **Watershed and fisheries restoration projects**
- **Wildlife habitat restoration projects**

Law and Policy requires:

- **Correspondence to interested parties**
- **Scoping meetings**
- **Legalized procedures**

(“Traditional” Methods of Public Involvement)

Duck Creek / Swains Access Management Project 1997-2002



Duck Creek Characteristics

High Road Density: Approx. 6 mi./sq. mi.

- **Numerous old logging roads**
- **“User-created” routes, particularly by owners of private residences**

Highest OHV use of any area on the Forest

- **Proximate to Cedar City, St. George**
- **3 hours from Las Vegas**
- **Subdivisions within the Forest boundaries**
- **Hundreds of building permits issued each year**

Ecologic Concerns and OHVs In the Duck Creek Area



Concern over obvious proliferation of unplanned routes

- **Soil erosion**
- **Watershed and vegetation damage**
- **Wildlife harassment**
- **Habitat degradation**
- **Impacts to cultural sites**
- **Conflicts/ *confusion* among users**

Rough Beginnings

Proposed Action: Eliminate cross-country travel and reduce road densities from 6 miles per square mile to 2. (The proposed action would close over 60% of the motorized routes in the project area).

First presentations to the public were very contentious.

- **Public believed that the decision was already made.**
- **Information was originally felt to not be site-specific enough.**
- **Threats of appeals and litigation by both environmental *and* motorized access interests.**



Collaboration Efforts

Public Comments

- **45% wanted extensive road closures**
- **45% wanted increased motorized opportunities**

Adaptive Efforts During Planning

Project specialists and Ranger cooperated with a variety of interests, in an attempt to develop alternatives that better met the needs of access, recreation and resource protection.

- **County commissioners**
- **Interest/ activist groups**
- **General public**

These efforts included *field trips and map work* with the public. This effort better illustrated *actual uses and values* related to roads, and *mutual understanding* emerged.

Collaborative Alternative

An alternative was developed and selected that addressed concerns pertaining to connectivity of access, while retaining the necessary actions that provided better wildlife and resource protection.

While not deemed perfect, this alternative was not appealed or litigated.

Because of improved community relationships, over \$250,000 in cooperative funding (State and County) was contributed to the Duck Creek area in 2003-2004. Additional funding continues.

Project Results

- **60% of the motorized routes were still closed, reducing density to 2.3 miles per square mile**
- **Hydrological improvements were implemented**
- **A designated ATV trail system was developed, recreation opportunity improved**
- **A new ATV map was produced and the Forest Travel map was revised and improved, entire area was signed according new maps**
- **Informational kiosks were installed to educate and inform visitors**



Travel Planning Issues Tend to be Extremely Value-Laden

- Protection of species, habitat, forest health**
- Public lands: right to access, individualized pursuit of happiness**
- Conflict between types of use and values**
- Polarized interests; viewing themselves as alienated publics**

Traditional methods of public involvement may not be sufficient to handle the controversy and may lead to continued problems in compliance and conflict.

Uncertain Success

Concerns remain about the effectiveness of this project and some people disagree about its success in terms of impacts to ecology.

While no one knows if the decision is forever sustainable, it is an obvious and adaptable step toward improvement. It provided a forum to begin serious, ongoing collaborative management.

The truth is, visitor confusion has been diminished, expectations for trail etiquette are made clearer, people are having fun and the land shows better evidence of care. We believe we have a more *attentive* visitor than before.

Motorized Travel Planning

The “MTP” Approach

We don't have just an OHV management problem, we have a roads problem.

MTP is an Opportunity to:

- Comprehensively improve management of all wheeled motor vehicle use (public and administrative)
- Better protect species and resources, and rehabilitate damaged areas
- Enhance both motorized and non-motorized recreation experiences

Do Not start NEPA right away

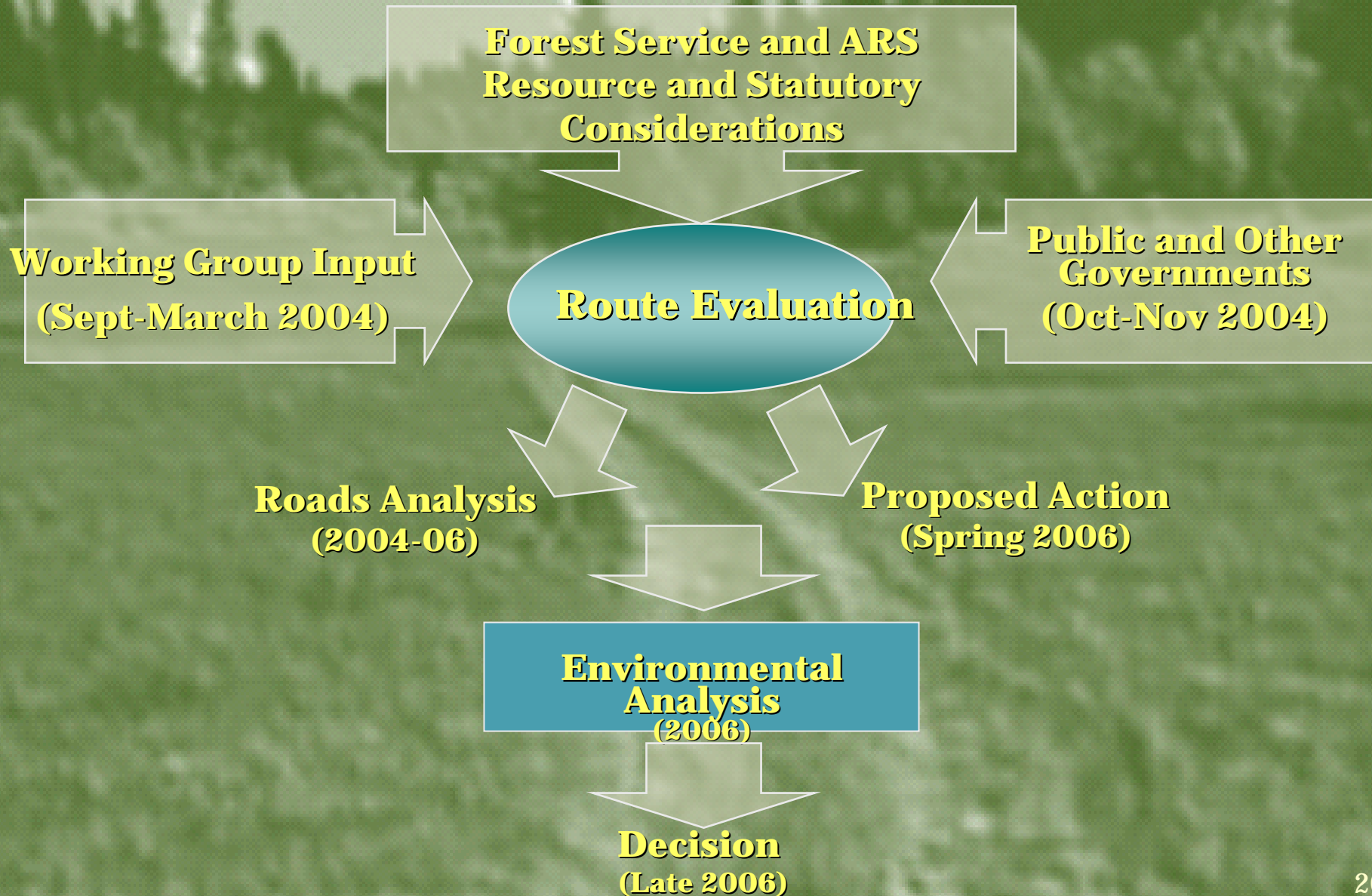
- **Take time** to prepare well - know the ground
- **Think ahead** (anticipate effects, incompatibilities)
- **Collaborate** early and often with concerned citizens and

1. *Inventory*



- If possible, begin with a **comprehensive inventory to complete a roads analysis**
- Forest-wide 1996 to 2005
- Over 6,000 miles of motorized routes / 1,500 miles non-system “undefined”
- **Assess** system and non-system routes carefully but separately
- **Integrate** existing plans / projects
- **Utilize** site-specific and landscape scale data
- **Use data** from FS resource specialists *and public*

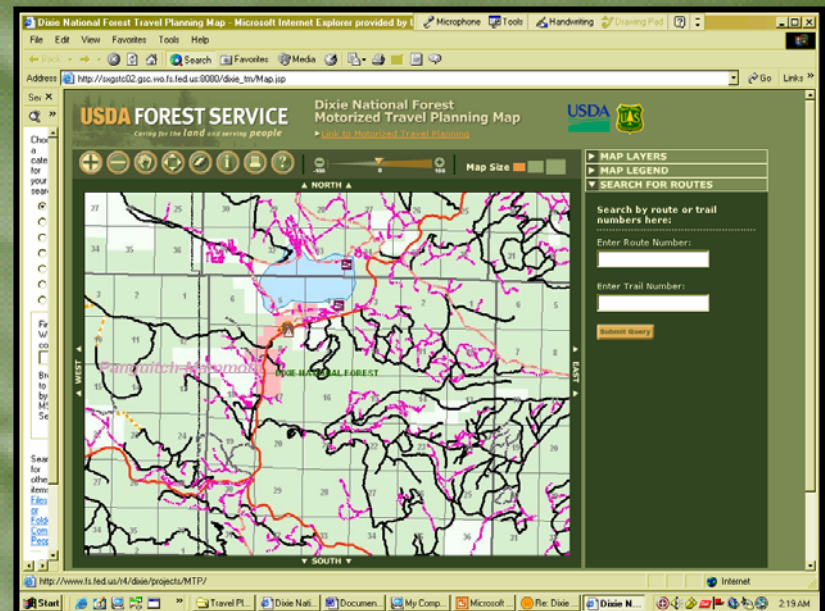
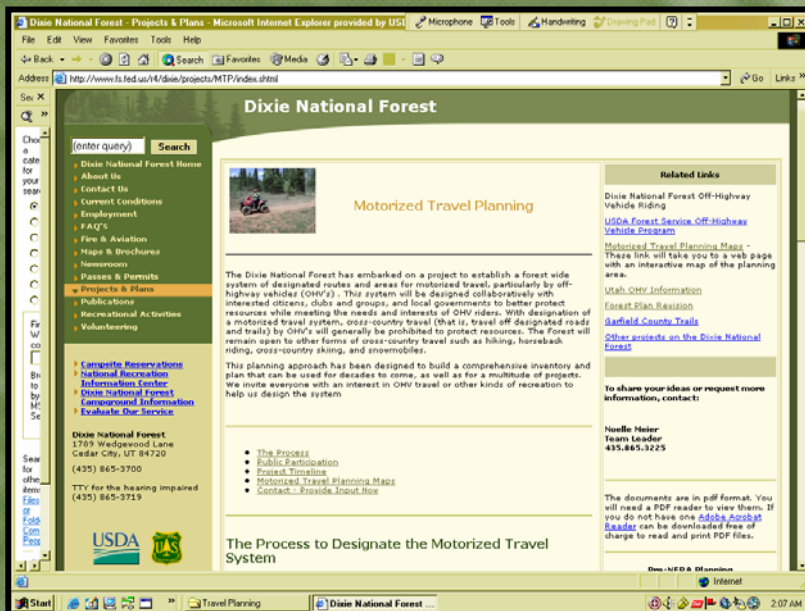
2. Collaborative / Feedback Design



Provide Opportunities for Feedback

Keep people in the loop

- Use websites
- Provide maps/ data
- Go to meetings
- Make periodic phone calls



3. Systematic Route Evaluation

- Evaluate all routes, integrating law, science and values
- District/ Forest answered route questions
- Data organization/ range of alternatives
- 3rd party contractor-Advanced Resource Solutions (ARS)



Public Input-MTP Work Group

- **Reenlisted assistance of Topical Work Group members (Suitability issues of dispersed camping/ OHV)**
- **Multi-stakeholder (Gov., interest groups, grazing, timber)**
- **Presented approach and route questions, ultimately asking:**
 - **Are we adequately considering the public's issues and concerns?**
 - **Are our processes thorough, trackable and logical?**
 - **Do they adequately allow for collaboration between the public and the Forest Service?**
 - **And if not...how do we improve?**



Collaborative Public Input

- **But these were not easy to answer**
- **Issues of distrust surfaced**
- **Value-laden debates**
(philosophy, transparency
in process, use of
technology
- **How NEPA would be met**
- **Worked through issues**
together, workshop
- **Built appreciation, work**
through complexity
together, prepared to go to
public



Conclusion: Appreciation is an Ongoing Community Effort

Because of **lack of trust**, organizations may want to position themselves early to fight you on **process: Science, law and policy**

- Don't let this stop a good collaborative process
- Biophysical sciences won't solve social and political problems
- Law and policy only provides sideboards for action

Collaboration provides the best opportunity to influence early planning and decisions

- Polarized, alienated publics fear loss, makes cooperation difficult
- Collaboration efforts can be complicated, expensive and requires energy and fortitude
- National positions and personal agendas can derail effective communication at the local level
- Deeper public involvement can make you professionally and personally vulnerable, **but you get to know people *which makes a BIG difference***

Collaboration is Necessary to Building Appreciation

- Goes beyond legal requirements to find more compatible solutions
- Develops a shared land ethic and shared ownership, shared responsibility, partnerships for future maintenance and monitoring
- Improves trust, respect and understanding between public and land managers
- Looks honestly at sustainability of human uses, trade-offs
- Uses comprehensive planning for protection of sensitive resources while providing for a range of public and administrative needs
- Provides early awareness of connected issues across boundaries; consistency of statutory guidelines and requirements
- Addresses effects on local economies, including timber, range and tourism
- Takes a perspective that conflict can be an opportunity

Adaptive Management is Part of Planning, Too

Use **best information available to improve process**

- Seek to **understand values** (not just positions, but “why”) and consider that as data
- **Be responsive** - Clear up confusion as soon as it occurs
- **Consult with collaborators** - fill in agency gaps and create better analysis through constant feedback
- **Formal and informal communications:** As you get to know people your best tools are live informal meetings and frequent phone calls. Stay connected!
- Participants become **appreciative, invested** in the forest, help keep it a special place.
- Impossible to determine **sustainability** of decisions- **positive steps**

Contact Information

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